

NEWS RELEASE  
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## FIRE DANGER AHEAD OF SCHEDULE IN SOUTHERN UTAH REGIONS

A recent wildland fire in southern Utah serves as a wake-up call that fire danger in many areas throughout Utah is unusually high due to prolonged drought conditions. Moisture levels, especially throughout southern portions of the state, are well below average.

“Wildland fire this early in the year is quite rare,” says Larry LeForte, Southwestern Area Fire Management Officer for the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands. “The problem is compounded right now because we have few resources available this early in the season to fight fire.”

A 100-acre brush fire in Washington City destroyed an out-building and threatened others. Investigators say two children playing with matches caused the fire.

“This fire was also representative of a growing trend in Utah, wildland fire in the urban interface,” said LeForte. “As we continue to build into heavily vegetated areas it’s important that steps are taken to reduce the threat of wildland fire.”

In an effort to educate community planners, elected officials, builders, developers, landscapers, insurance agents, homeowner associations, real estate representatives, emergency planners and fire officials, a national seminar has been scheduled at Snowbird resort near Salt Lake City. A Utah Firewise Communities Workshop is scheduled for April 29 through May 1, 2002.

Participants will contribute to the national dialogue on this growing trend and will be given a wealth of material to help them better prepare for the natural cycle of fire in their own hometowns. If you’d like to learn more about the workshop series or become involved in local planning, visit the Firewise website at [www.firewise.org/communities](http://www.firewise.org/communities). Or call Larry LeForte at 435-586-4408.

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